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ABSTRACT

Ninety-six study projects, for individuals or groups, dealing with works by American authors or America's history in the past 100 years are listed. (JM)

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF LOS ANGELES

SUGGESTED INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE CLASSES

Dr. Paul F. Schumann

Students are encouraged to substitute titles and topics of literary merit, with teacher prior approval, for any of those on the following list. Works by American authors or dealing with our nation in the past 100 years are to receive primary attention during this semester. However, reports incorporating comparisons with works by foreign authors are clearly acceptable.

You may elect to work in small groups on certain of the projects if you secure teacher consent in advance. Certain of the reports may be arranged to give orally in your small group sessions. You will also be notified as to the due dates for written ones. It is vital that all reports be carefully substantiated with specific citation from the materials used. This will not call for detailed footnoting, however.

A teacher will go over your rough draft before you start the final copy. You are encouraged to discuss the progress of your report with a teacher during independent study time.

1. Man's heroic death for a principle in "The Crucible" and "A Man For All Seasons."

2. The change in attitude from cowardice to courage by the main character in Crane's Red Badge of Courage and Remarque's All Quiet On the Western Front.

3. The downfall of men as characterized in Capote's In Cold Blood and Camus' The Stranger.

4. The versatility in character development by John Hersey in any two or three of his following books: The Child Buyer, A Single Pebble, Hiroshima, Bell for Adano, The Wall.

5. The multi-faceted dilemmas and challenges of the school teacher: To Sir, with Love, Up the Down Staircase, Goodbye, Mr. Chips, Blackboard Jungle, Summerhill, and The Thread That Runs So True.

6. Perspectives of death as seen in poetry: Teasdale's "Blue Squills," Millay's "Morituras," Frost's "Out, Out," and "Death of the Hired Man," and Robinson's "Richard Cory."

7. Perspectives of death as seen in London's "To Build a Fire," Harte's "Outcasts of Poker Flat," Beirce's "Horseman in the Sky," Steinbeck's "Flight," Cather's "Paul's Case," and any two of Poe's works not previously assigned to the class.

8. The Negro's search for identity in any two of the following: Go Tell It On The Mountain, Black Like Me, Malcolm X, Black Power, "Raisin In the Sun," Invisible Man, Black Boy.

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9. Comparative views of the world to come: 1984, Fahrenheit 451, Martian Chronicles, Brave New World.

10. Vying for positions of power, from boyhood to manhood: Lord of the Flies, Separate Peace, Point of No Return, or the non-fiction Organization Man.

11. Disparate searches by teenagers for a sense of identity: Go Tell It On The Mountain, Separate Peace, Points of Departure, Catcher in the Rye.

12. Comparative and contrasting features in the main characters of Billy Budd and Lord Jim.

13. Contrasting views of war in Steinbeck's The Moon Is Down and Hemingway's For Whom The Bell Tolls, or the latter book with Hemingway's Farewell to Arms.

14. A student's collection of his own poetry, including five or more examples of cinquain and haiku, two sonnets, and a modern ballad with an appropriately taped musical background.

15. Contrasting elements of humor and plot in "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" and "The Solid Gold Cadillac"; a separate report on the ingredients of humor in the poetry of Dorothy Parker and Ogden Nash.

16. Contrasting elements of detached or ephermeral love in "The King and I," "My Fair Lady," "South Pacific," "Brigadoon," and "Man of La Mancha."

17. Man's unwillingness or inability to accept responsibility for his own actions in Rabbit, Run and "Death of a Salesman."

18. A detailed comparision of plot development and characterization in "Romeo and Juliet" with "West Side Story."

19. Comparative thematic elements in three Poe short stories (not studied by the class as a whole) and 6-8 of his poems.

20. The use of color in several works of Poe compared with that in Crane's The Red Badge of Courage.

21. Word imagery and etymology (where appropriate) in selected short stories and poetry of Poe.

22. Dialectical phrases and their equivalents extant in at least four different sections of the U.S.

23. A comparison of attitudes toward the mentally retarded in "Haircut," "He," Of Mice and Men, and "Flowers for Algernon" plus either of the following books: Magee's One of the Family and Buck's Child Who Never Grew.

24. Comparative problems in the westward movement of the late 1800's (Guthrie's The Way West) and the 1930's (Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath).

25. Problems of living in the Great Plains as seen in Cather's My Antonia, Rolvaag's Giants in the Earth, and Walker's Winter Wheat.

26. A decadent view of the South as seen through one play of Eugene O'Neill, one of

26. A decadent view of the South as seen through one play of Eugene O'Neill, one of Tennessee Williams, and one book by Faulkner.

27. The symbolic use of animals in Orwell's Animal Farm with Tolkien's The Hobbitt and (optionally) Carroll's Alice in Wonderland.

28. The local color style of two or three Bret Harte short stories and one Edna Ferber novel.

29. A comparison of symbolic nuances in Steinbeck's The Pearl and Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea.

30. Man's illusionary views of himself in Miller's "Death of a Salesman," Camus' The Fall, and E. A. Robinson's poem, "Miniver Cheevy."

31. Feelings of alienation and problems of girls growing up in McCuller's "Member of the Wedding," West's Cress Delahanty, Smith's A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, and Williams' "Glass Menagerie."

32. The horrors of nuclear holocaust in Shute's On the Beach, Hersey's Hiroshima, and Burdick's Fail-Safe.

33. The use of symbolism in the following Frost poems: "The Road Not Taken," "Fire and Ice," "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening," "Mending Wall," "Departmental."

34. Varying views on the life and death of Abraham Lincoln as seen in (1) the poems of Vachel Lindsay and Walt Whitman, (2) excerpts from Sandburg's biography, and (3) the novel, The Day Lincoln was Shot.

35. The creation of a poem which parallels the structure and ideas in Sandburg's "Chicago" but selecting another major American city; the creation of vivid word descriptions (approximately 50 words) for 15 dramatic color pictures from magazines.

36. An analysis of six to eight of Walt Whitman's free verse poems as to style, word choice, purpose, and effect; the creation of one modern day version of his "I Hear America Singing," optionally set against a backdrop of a current ballad.

37. A comparative analysis of six O. Henry short stories as to types of people and use of the surprise ending; then, a comparison of these endings with three of Poe's and three of Harte's short stories.

38. A detailed comparison of six to eight satirical sports' columns by Jim Murray in the Los Angeles Times with the style exhibited in four or five of Ring Lardner's or Damon Runyon's short stories.

39. Set to a musical background and in poetic style, the glorification of the entrance into heaven of a modern day hero (as in Vachel Lindsay's "General William Booth Enters Heaven"); a comparison of the settings and plots of "The Sound of Music" and "Man of La Mancha" on the two occasions in each play when "Climb Every Mountain" and "The Quest," respectively, are sung and/or played.

40. A study of the satirical tone in the writings of Goodman Ace, Cleveland Amory, and John Ciardi in four or five recent issues of the "Saturday Review"; a comparison of their satire with that in two humorous essays by Robert Benchley.

41. A contrasting study of two Kennedy biographies with focus on his handling of domestic and foreign issues and **only** moderate analysis of differences concerning his asassination.

42. The psychological implications of and probably causation for the chief character's inability to come to grips with reality in Thurber's "Secret Life of Walter Mitty," Albee's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf" (the play version), Williams' "Glass Menagerie," and Miller's "Death of a Salesman."

43. A comparative character delineation of Franklin D. Roosevelt in the play, "Sunrise at Campobello," with Helen Keller in "The Miracle Worker" stressing the interplay of their physical disabilities and their personalities; or, a comparison of either play and one biographical account of the same individual's life, emphasizing the interplay of personal ambition and physical disability.

44. A study of the satirical view Sinclair Lewis portrays of life in the 1920's using Babbitt or Main Street or Arrowsmith compared with the views expressed in the lyrics of six to eight popular ballads today; or, a comparison of a Lewis novel with the satires of modern life in the cartoons of Pfeiffer, Al Capp, and others.

45. A study of the literary strengths and weaknesses of F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby compared with his Tender is the Night, including an analysis of the parallels in the personality development of the central character in each.

46. A comparative study of the ministers who are central characters in Elmer Gantry and Rain.

47. A comparison of the chief character in Arrowsmith with the one in The Great Gatsby.

48. An analysis of characteristics of life in the 1920's as presented by F. L. Allen in Only Yesterday with a carefully documented parallel of life in the 1960's.

49. The effects of the pressures of fighting in World War II upon the personality of Captain Queeg in The Caine Mutiny and upon Yossarian in Catch-22.

50. A comparison of the activities and personalities of Captain Ahab in Moby Dick and Captain Queeg in The Caine Mutiny.

51. A comparison of personalities and ways of coping with problems of growing up: Huck Finn and Holden Caulfield.

52. Satirical humor in war situations: "No Time for Sergeants," "Teahouse of the August Moon," and Catch-22.

53. The manipulation of human beings for the sake of personal gain: The Child-Buyer, "Requiem for a Heavyweight," and optionally "Measure of a Man."

54. The dilemmas presented when man takes the law into his own hands: Clark's The Ox-bow Incident and Wouk's The Caine Mutiny or Nordhoff and Hall's Munity on the Bounty.

55. Improved quality in the treatment by whites of the American Negro: Uncle Tom's Cabin and To Kill a Mockingbird.

56. Application of psychological principles in Hawthorne's "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," James' "The Romance of Certain Old Clothes," Hemingway's "The Killers," and Wharton's Ethan Frome; where appropriate, a comparison in the use of the surprise ending in certain of these works.

57. The problems of the 1930's portrayed by John Steinbeck in the Grapes of Wrath, In Dubious Battle, and Of Mice and Men.

58. Comparative studies of Rebecca, Maxim de Winters, and Mrs. Danvers in du Maurier's Rebecca with individuals of similar personality and station in life in Edith Wharton's "The Lady's Maid's Bell" and Henry James' "The Romance of Certain Old Clothes."

59. Differing views and perceptions of ants in Frost's poem, "Departmental," Bellamy's Alta, and an excerpt from Walden called "Brute Neighbors"; also, how a man, turned into an insect, views the world about him: Kafka's The Metamorphosis.

60. Analyses of any two true stories describing how man has handled personal tragedy in his life: Jim Piersall's Fear Stikes Out, John Gunther's Death Be Not Proud, Perry Burgess' Who Walk Alone, and Bill Stern's The Taste of Ashes.

61. Comparative study of three Negroes' struggle to succeed in life: Ethel Waters' His Eye Is on the Sparrow, Marian Anderson's My Lord, What a Morning, and Althea Gibson's I Always Wanted to Be Somebody.

62. Contrasting study of justice stemming from mutinous actions on the high seas: Melville's Billy Budd and/or Nordhoff and Hall's Mutiny On The Bounty and Wouk's The Caine Mutiny.

63. Contrasting ways in which young men struggle to find direction in their lives: S. Maugham's Of Human Bondage and Salinger's Catcher in the Rye.

64. The puzzlement and wonder of the young adolescent as he views the world about him: Bradbury's Dandelion Wine or McCullers' Member of the Wedding, and Lee's To Kill A Mockingbird.

65. A comparison of the political machinations of man in Drury's Advise and Consent and in O'Connor's The Last Hurrah; or, a comparison of the latter with Warren's All the King's Men.

66. Life in the Warsaw ghettoes brought about by Nazi brutality: Hersey's The Wall and Uris' Mila 18.

67. A comparison of life in "Oklahoma" as viewed by Rodgers and Hammerstein with that of Edna Ferber in Cimarron.

68. The harshness of life for women on the plains as seen in Cather's My Antonia compared with Aldrich's A Lantern in Her Hand and the modern novel of the dilemma by a rancher's teen-aged daughter, Winter Wheat by Mildred Walker.

69. The pressures of the modern business world in T. H. White's The View from the 40th Floor compared with William Whyte's The Organization Man.

70. The attitudes and actions of American POW's in "Stalag 17" compared with Westheimer's Von Ryan's Express.

71. A biographical comparison of the wives of famous presidents: Irving Stone's Love Is Eternal (concerning Mary Todd Lincoln) with his The President's Lady (about Rachel Jackson).

72. Differing views of death as expressed in poetry: Vachel Lindsay's "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight" and "In Praise of Johnny Appleseed"; Whitman's "Come Up from the Fields, Father" and "As Toilsome I Wander'd Virginia's Wood"; Teasdale's "I Shall Not Care" with Dickinson's "My Life Closed Twice" and "Bustle in the House"; Masters' "Lucinda Matlock" with "George Gray"; Timrod's "Ode" with Ryan's "The Conquered Banner"; and the creation of a ballad to the dead (in Viet Nam, for example) taped with an appropriate musical background.

73. A comparison of plots, settings, characterizations, and themes in Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" with four short stories each by Katherine Mansfield and Katherine Anne Porter; a contrast of these women's works with four short stories by Edith Wharton.

74. A comparison of Salinger's "For Esme' - with Love and Squalor" and Heller's Catch-22.

75. A comparison of the central figures in Irwin Shaw's "Main Currents of American Thought" and John Updike's Rabbit, Run.

76. Problems confronting young boys as they grow up: Bradbury's Dandelion Wine and Saroyan's The Human Comedy.

77. A comparison of man and his relations with animals as portrayed in the novels The Call of the Wild, Born Free, and White Fang.

78. A contrast of the fictional and non-fictional accounts of the life of Wm. Randolph Hearst: Citizen Hearst and Citizen Kane.

79. A comparison of autobiographical accounts dealing with personal dedication: Tom Dooley (The Night They Burned the Mountain) and Albert Schweitzer (Out of My Life and Thought).

80. A comparison of poetry dealing with the "lover" in society: Emily Dickinson and Rod McKuen (Stanyon St. and Other Sorrows and Listen to the Warm).

81. A comparative treatment of people's reactions to the tragic death of young people with incurable diseases: John Gunther's Death Be Not Proud and Mark Harris' Bang the Drum Slowly.

82. A comparison of Gone with the Wind and any brief, decadent view of the South by one of the following: Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, or Wm. Faulkner.

83. A comparison of character development and literary style in selected works by Damon Runyon, Ring Lardner, and Mark Harris.

84. The hazards of archeological misinterpretation as seen in Robert Nathan's brief satire, The Weans, compared with James Michener's monumental study of Hawaii.

85. Symptoms of mental illness as presented in Willa Cather's short story, "Paul's Case," Conrad Aiken's short story, "Silent Snow, Secret Snow," and Hannah Green's treatment of a mentally ill patient, I Never Promised You a Rose Garden, C. W. Beers' A Mind That Found Itself, or Jim Piersall's Fear Strikes Out.

86. The real or imaginary threats posed by the outside world which lead man to attempt to flee from it: Steinbeck's "Flight," Hemingway's "The Killers," K. A. Porter's "He," and Saul Bellow's Henderson, The Rain King.

87. Reactions of humans who have been in difficulty because of law-breaking activities: "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner," In Cold Blood, "Bird Man of Alcatraz," and (optionally) the movie, "Bonnie and Clyde."

88. A comparison of Steinbeck's Tortilla Flat with Cannery Row as to character, plot, setting, and thesis.

89. A comparative and contrasting study of the fictional characterization of (a) Fr. Latour and Fr. Vaillant in Cather's Death Comes for the Archbishop with (b) Pope Karil in West's Shoes of the Fisherman.

90. A comparative study of the decadent rich depicted in Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby and Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises.

91. The difficulty in facing up to life's problems which Mr. Henry and "Rabbit" have in Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms and Updike's Rabbit, Run, respectively.

92. The effectiveness of prose works written as a series of letters or as a diary: Aldrich's "Marjorie Daw," Lardner's "I Can't Breathe," and Mather's One Summer in Between.

93. The dramatic effect achieved through the psychological treatment of time in Bellow's Henderson, the Rain King and W. Morris' In Orbit.

94. The satire in Wibberley's The Mouse That Roared compared with the satire in three or or more articles by Art Buchwald (in The Los Angeles Times) on contemporary international affairs.

95. A contrastive analysis of boys rivaling for leadership positions: Knowles' A Separate Peace and Potok's The Chosen.

96. Problems encountered by teen-aged boys searching for a sense of purpose in life: Hesse's Demian and Potok's The Chosen.